DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 013 HE 011 934

AUTHOR Hogges, Ralph
TITLE The Administrator and Politics: Strategies for Success.
PUB DATE [79]
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Role; College Administration; Educational Policy; Federal Aid; *Financial Support; Government Role; *Government School Relationship; *Higher Education; *Policy Formation; *Political Influences; State Aid
IDENTIFIERS *Lobbying

ABSTRACT

The importance of political tactics to the university administrator is discussed. Policies and appropriations for higher education are ultimately decided by the legislature and governor, and thus the governing board or university administration needs to establish a good working relationship with the governmental bodies. It is suggested that administrators need to speak personally to the senators and representatives in their district and also those at the federal level. Alumni, faculty, staff, deans, vice presidents, presidents, and board members should be involved in efforts to promote the goals and objectives of the institution. They should express the need for support to legislators, mayors, commissioners, and other local, county, state, and federal agencies. Administrators should know as much as possible about each legislature that must be dealt with and must get together many facts to present to the legislatures. Trustees and others who know legislators should be briefed to insure that everyone is giving the same message to the legislators. Any information sent to legislators should also be sent to their friends within the university, and followups should be undertaken. The advice of experts like paid lobbyists can be beneficial. Some institutions may need to hold conferences, seminars, institutes, and courses to develop political skills. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED178013

THE ADMINISTRATOR AND POLITICS: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

By Ralph Hogges, Ed.D.
Associate Dean
Division of Student Affairs
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Ralph Hogges
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE 011 934

THE ADMINISTRATOR AND POLITICS: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Our society has, to a considerable extent, perceived politics to be a dirty word or phrase and attach characteristics such as special interests, alleged unlawful acts, and dirty tactics to obtain goals and objectives for particular constituents. Academicians have, for years, steered clear of politics and politicians and are paying a dear price for not utilizing such potential.

It is self evident that almost every decision that is made derives from some political action or reaction. Politics doesn't have to be dirty. The mere mention of politics doesn't have to imply "Watergate". Political tactics, techniques and approaches can be promoted with integrity.

As administrators take a closer look at the present and plan for the future in terms of increased funding needs for salary raises, fringe benefits, lower student-faculty ratio, new programs, more support for faculty research, new and better facilities, maintenance, more loans and scholarships to students and lower fees and tuition - it should be realized that political involvement is the more reasonable and viable mechanism to meet such needs.

DEFINITION AND EXPRESSED NEEDS FOR POLITICS

A retired teaching professor, university president and chancellor of the Ohio Board of regents, by the name of Millet contends that, "the term politics is a word of noble purpose and great promise.... It has been said that politics is the process in a society of deciding who obtains what, where and how. But the process cannot be separated from purpose, or from the operative idols that establish the standard of acceptable political behavior.... Higher education conducted under state law with the assistance of state appropriatiated funds is higher education engaged in politics."[1]

It was three years ago, 1975, that the author realized the significance and impact that knowledge and skills in political astuteness/clout/pull had on the administrators' ability to accomplish the goals and objectives of institutions of higher education. Administrators from all across the country poured into Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to avail themselves of knowledge and skills provided by the American Association of University Administrators Conference on Politics and Higher Education. Topics covered included Higher Education and the State House, Decreasing Enrollment and its Impact on the Legislature, Forging Effective Communication Links with the Legislature and the Role of Trustees in the Political Process, Prospects for the Future.

These seminars were presented by Legislators, educators and other interested sources in an effort to "provide insight into how university administrators can optimize relationships between higher education and the legislature."[2] It was obvious that many of the administrators felt something was missing in their leadership ability, particularly political knowledge, skills and techniques. Such conclusion was drawn from the nature of the questions and comments made.

It is so easy to be naive and to undermine political potential. The success of administrators today depends on more than knowledge and skills in teaching, curriculum development and other scholarly activities. The time has gone when the tenured full professor with no administrative background is able to move into an administrative position and move the institution efficiently and effectively toward the goals and objectives for which it was established. This is not to say that all such professors undertaking such tasks will not succeed but studies continue to show that such responsibilities have been more successful with experienced and trained administrators particularly at this crucial time in history.

It is imperative at this point to take an objective look at literature in the field that provides valid and reliable perspectives on the needs for politics in higher education. One such perspective is provided by Nowlan as he contends

that, "Higher education is subject to diverse political pressures. Some people tend to forget that policies and appropriations for higher education are ultimately decided by the legislature and governor, and thus that any governing board or university administration is only as effective as its working relationship with those branches of government will permit."[3] Daugherty further supports Nowlan's position as he indicated that, "We need to recognize that politicians are human. One of the problems I think academicians have had all along is they are afraid they will loose their virginity if they become involved with politicians, and that's just not the way its going to be if you're going to get involved."[4]

There are needs for political involvement at the Deans' level, Directors', Vice Presidents', Presidents, Board of Trustees and Board of Regents levels. Whether the institutions are private or public, political influences are helping to chart the course of destiny. Moon feels that, "more involvement by the trustees in political matters will, in the future, be desirable and necessary.... Public money for higher education is obtained, in the final analysis, in only one way - through the political process.... higher education must do more to increase its involvement in the political process."[5]

OPTIMIZING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND POLITICAL CONSTITUENTS

Concerned administrators are encouraged to ask themselves several questions:

1. Am I utilizing my political potential effectively?
2. Is there a need to assess and further refine my political tactics, techniques and/or approaches?
3. When was the last time you spoke personally to the senators and representators of your district and also those at the federal level?
4. Do you know them both by name and face?
5. Are your faculty, staff, Deans, Vice Presidents, Presidents and Board members involved in your efforts to promote the goals and objectives of your institution and are about the business of expressing the need for support to Legislators, mayors, commissioners and other local, county, state and federal agencies and organizations?
6. Are alumna invited by you to join forces in your efforts?

These are only a few of the questions that comes to mind but the list possibly goes on and on. Administrators should be most interested in determining what tactics, techniques or approaches are more or most effective in developing and optimizing relationships between higher education and

politicians at the local, state and federal level, between the mayors, commissioners and other agencies and organizations.

Some of the effective approaches were shared by Moon in his presentation at the American Association of University Administrators' Conference as he spoke about the Role of Trustees In the Political Process. "What is involved in carrying out an effective program to achieve results in the process. I asked Earle Clifford, Vice President of Fairleigh Dickinson University what the key elements were of the F.D.U. Program. He identified the 12 key points as follows:

1. You must know as much as possible about each legislature with whom you must deal.
2. Get together a great many facts - the more the better; legislators are impressed with the numbers.
3. Find out who amongst your friends (e.g. trustees) are friends of legislators.
4. Assign legislators and friends on a "one on one" basis.
5. Get all of your "one on one" people together and brief them so that everyone is telling the same story.
6. Make extensive use of the phone for contacts.
7. When you communicate with legislators use only a single piece of paper at any one time - keep it

short and simple.

8. Any information sent to legislators should be sent to the one on one friends with follow-ups required.
9. Get advice from experts - use paid lobbyist to help set up your program.
10. If a group of institutions are involved make sure the program is supported by all.
11. Be prepared to loose; your timing may be bad.
12. Make sure whether you win or loose that your friends remain your friends."

Daugherty, State Senator, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania identified additional approaches and techniques at the same conference in his presentation on Forging Effective Communication Links With the Legislature. "I think that you should realize though, that as institutions you have political clout. You certainly have a number of students, you have a faculty, you have probably in the parents of the student body one of the greatest political groups you could muster if you needed them... you need a coordinated effort..... A group that encompass public and private colleges is the best of all because you eliminate the competition for the dollar....

The next point is that I think you need a spokesman. A lobbyist committee in some circles appears to be a dirty word. A lobbyist has a very important role to fill.... you

need the organization, you need a New Jersey Association of Colleges and Universities.... or whatever, to represent you and to build an overall approach to the needs of higher education.

You have to develop data... you have to recognize which legislators represent the college, represent you and more importantly, which legislators represent where your students come from.... And lastly is the development of resources. Do you allow your college facilities to be used by groups which could become political allies... Do you allow your facilities to be used by Senate and House Committees.... Who's on your board? Sometimes you may get a legislator that display on an issue. He's from a political party, and you'll happen to know of that political party, or the vice chairman of your board knows the leader of the political party, and a little call from the vice chairman of your board to a political leader who in turn calls the senator just may get the senator in line to give you a vote.

And finally, who in the legislature is a graduate of your college.... If you are an alumnus of your college, you've got a built in thing to start with and you ought to take advantage of it."[7]

The techniques and approaches presented by the educators and legislators should not be taken lightly. The author feels that such techniques and approaches are also effective with

mayors, commissioners and other local, state and federal agencies and organizations.

It cannot be emphasized enough that such efforts should be a team effort, a coordinated effort and monitored. Such efforts should be taken serious at all times because the success of your institution depends, to a considerably extent, on the success of those efforts. For those administrators that are not involved due to lack of experience and training in the tactics, techniques and approaches to developing political astuteness/pull/clout, it is recommended that immediate professional development in terms of conferences, seminars, institutes and courses, be pursued. For those administrators that are not involved due to their low regard and undermining of political potential, it is suggested that they do a comparative analysis with other institutions in terms of funding received and other support that is tied to the political process. The results of such studies will ultimately show that those administrators well versed in and utilizing skillful political tactics, techniques and approaches, far succeed the others in their securing funding at a quality level and obtaining the other necessities that enable them to move more efficiently and effectively toward the goals and objectives for which the institution was established.

The words of Millett exemplifies a brilliant conclusion of the significance of administrators involvement in the political process. "As I look ahead at what lies in prospect for higher education planning in the fifty states, I am prepared to stand by two forecasts. One is that the future of higher education policy and decision making rests upon the political relationship between the higher education community and the political leadership of a state. The second forecase is that the higher education community will remain weak and divisive in its approach to the political power of state government....

Politics is not the process of meeting felt needs; it is the process of responding to economic and social forces that compel political action....

Whatever happens, however, higher education must have political spokesmen - spokesmen who understand the glory of higher education but can talk the language of practical politics, spokesmen who seek great ends while pursuing reasonable and ethical compromise. Moreover, these spokesmen must have support, not continued criticism, because they are not perfect in word or deed."[8]

REFERENCES

1. Millett, John, Politics and Higher Education (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1974) pp. 115-116.

2. Proceedings of the AAUA Seminar on Politics and Higher Education (Pennsylvania: AAUA Publications Committee, 1975) p. 1.

3. Nowlan, James D., The Politics of Higher Education (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1976) p. VII.

4. Daugherty, Charles E., "Forging Effecture Communication Links With The Legislature." A paper presented at the AAUA Seminar on Politics and Higher Education (Pennsylvania: AAUA Publications Committee, 1975) pp. 10-11.

5. Moon, Jr., Rexford G., "The Roles of Trustees In The Political Process, Prospects For The Future." A paper presented at the AAUA Seminar On Politics And Higher Education (Pennsylvania: AAUA Publications Committee, 1975) pp. 16-23.

6. Ibid, p. 27.

7. Ibid, pp. 10-11.

8. Ibid, pp. 141-143.